

of the same general cause, they may have been made on him. As the gospel comprises an ample assemblage of intellectual views, and as the greater number of Christians are inevitably incapable of presenting them in a dignified character of conception and language from the same causes which disqualify them to do such justice to other intellectual subjects, it is not improbable that far the greater number of expressions which he has heard in his whole life, have been utterly below the subject. Obviously this is a very serious circumstance ; for if he had heard as much spoken on any other subject of high intellectual rank, as moral philosophy, or poetry, or rhetoric, in which perhaps he now takes great interest, and if a similar proportion of what he had heard had been as much below the subject, it is probable that he and the subject would have remained strangers. And it is a melancholy deposition against the human heart, that fewer unfavourable associations will cause it to recoil from the gospel, than from any other subject which comes with high claims.

The prejudicial influence of mental deficiency or meanness associated with evangelical doctrine, may have beset him in many ways. For instance, he has met with some zealous Christians, who not only were very slightly acquainted with the evidences of the truth, and the illustrations of the reasonableness, of their religion, but who actually felt no interest in the inquiry. Perhaps more than one individual attempted to deter him from pursuing it, by suggesting that inquiry either implies doubt, which was pronounced a criminal state of mind, or will probably lead to it, as a judgment on the profane inquisitiveness which, on such a subject, is not satisfied with implicitly believing. An attempt to examine, the foundation would be likely to end in a wish to demolish the structure.

He may sometimes have heard the discourse of sincere Christians, whose religion involved no intellectual exercise, and, strictly speaking, no *subject* of intellect. Separately from their feelings, it had no definition, no topics, no distinct succession of views. And if he or some other person attempted to talk on some part of the religion *itself*, as a thing definable and important, independently of the feelings of any individual, and as consisting in a vast congeries of ideas, concerning the divine government of the world, the